

A Remarkable Land

Those of us lucky enough to live in the Yellowstone region rarely step back and marvel at its diversity, chaos, and unique qualities.

Despite the perennial stories about Yellowstone (and other national parks) being “loved to death,” only two percent of the park is developed. Beyond the heavily-trafficked figure-eight road system, you’ll find the park untouched, rugged, and spectacular. Its 3,700 square miles are remarkably untrammeled.

Yet not far from the park borders, controversy simmers over development, whether for natural gas, oil, coal, or wind. Extensive resort construction and the recent proliferation of ranchettes are transforming the landscape. Want to start an argument in Wyoming, Montana, or Idaho? Ask about wolf reintroduction, grizzly bear management, fire policy, or grazing rights.

How about the rapid explosion of coal-bed methane wells? In a region where everyone is invested in the environment, opinions about its management run as hot and deep as the wondrous thermal system in Yellowstone itself. And like that thermal activity, there are frequent eruptions.

These different outlooks take place amidst some of the most stunning terrain on earth. To top it off, these contemporary environmental issues bubble just a few miles away from the mouth of the

Yellowstone Caldera, an ancient active volcano that, according to some scientists, may be 60,000 years overdue to explode.

The fate of Yellowstone’s ecosystem is fast approaching a crossroads. A wide range of opinion is taking shape while the caldera itself shows increasing signs of life. It’s an exciting time to live here.

—C.J. Box, novelist, Wyoming

GRAND PRISMATIC SPRING, YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK
MONTANA, CANYON OF THE GORGES

BLAKE LAKE, CONTINENTAL DIVIDE
NATIONAL MONUMENT

A map of the United States with a red rectangular box highlighting the central region, specifically the area around the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains. The box is centered over the state of Colorado. The map shows state boundaries and major geographical features like the Rocky Mountains and the Great Plains. The labels 'CANADA' and 'UNITED STATES' are visible at the top and bottom of the map, respectively.

—C.J. Box, novelist, Wyoming

Native Peoples

A photograph showing two Native American men riding horses in a race. The man in the foreground is wearing a white shirt with a red and yellow striped pattern on the sleeve and dark pants. The man behind him is wearing a blue shirt and a blue bandana. They are both smiling and looking towards the camera. The horses are brown and are running on a dirt track. In the background, there are other people and a white fence.

—Ren Freeman, Director, Eastern Shoshone Museum and Heritage Center, Fort Washakie, WY

—Libby Scott, animal curator, Grizzly and Wolf
Discovery Center, West Yellowstone, MT

Magnificent Wildlife

A large brown bear and its cub are walking through a field of yellow wildflowers. The bear is in the foreground, and the cub is slightly behind it. The background shows a hilly landscape with green grass and some trees.

"Wildlife watching here changes with the seasons. In spring, Elk wade in a sea of purple camas wildflowers. In winter, on snowshoes, you can track a coyote stalking a mouse to the edge of the water. Look up, and you're face-to-face with thirty yakking trumpeter swans floating on the river."


—Kyle Babbitt, year-round resident, Island Park, ID

[illegible]

A taxidermied moose with large, velvet-covered antlers stands in a diorama. The moose is positioned behind a dark, horizontal log. The background features autumn-themed decorations, including yellow and orange leaves on branches and a small table with a vase of flowers. The scene is lit with warm, ambient lighting.

Yellowstone's geyser basins, such as Old Faithful, and hot springs point to the presence of molten rock not far, in a geologist's view, below the surface. Other forces of nature are powerfully in evidence—mountain-forming upheavals, glaciers, and wildfires that scorch and revitalize natural systems. Snowmelt from Yellowstone's high country becomes streams that wind through volcanic terrain to feed the Snake, Missouri, and Green Rivers.


Nature's Forces

A wide-angle photograph of a powerful waterfall cascading down a sheer, light-colored rock face. The water is white and frothy as it falls, creating a misty spray at the base. The surrounding cliffs are rugged and sparsely covered with dark green evergreen trees. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

DEANER, MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY; BUFFALO BILL HISTORICAL CENTER. CODY ARTS CENTER, CODY, WYOMING

“Bozeman is full of talent—we have 100 artists working here at the Emerson Center alone—so it’s no surprise that culture is taking its place next to the lure of the great outdoors. During winter, people show up at films and galleries in their ski gear, looking for a great cultural experience to cap off a day on the slopes.”

—Yvonne Reddy, gallery attendant and docent, Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture, Bozeman, MT



"Yellowstone is an enormous volcano, which is difficult to see if you're looking for the familiar cone shape. In the past 2.5 million years, two of the largest volcanic eruptions known on Earth happened here. The most recent of these formed the Yellowstone Caldera, the depression where most of the park's 10,000-plus geothermal features are found. Earthquakes and other ground movements remind us that this volcano is still very much alive."

Lewis and Clark Caverns
Lewis and Clark came close but missed seeing the opening to this cave 90 years before the underground wonderland of valleys and columns was first explored. Modern adventurers have since discovered it and preserved it by the New Deal's Civilian Conservation Corps.

Hobgen Lake Earthquake
The six-mile-long Snake Lake began to fill in 1939 when a landslide plugged the Madison River canyon. The slide buried 19 campers, but destroyed the lower Madison Valley from the tsunamis that shook over Hobgen Dam higher up the canyon.

Sr. Anthony Sand Dunes
Wind moves these mountains of granulated quartz eight feet a year, erasing the recurring ruts made by armies of off-road vehicles. Off-highways and horseback riders are no trace systems for exploring the \$1,000 acres of shifting sand.

Mesa Verde
Most of the people who lived here in the final stages of the Anasazi culture were gone 10,000 years ago.

Teton Foot Museum
The high water line at the doorway hints at the destructive scale of flooding which followed the washout of a new earthen dam, just days after its completion in 1976.

Blackfoot

Fort Hall

Pocatello

Merriam Half-Acre Trail
Actually 222 square miles, this frozen valley of heat was formed by a succession of lava flows.

Banken Gardens at Lava Hot Springs

Fossil Butte National Monument
Some of the world's best preserved fossils are found in this quiet sagebrush desert. Fossilized fish, insects, plants, jellyfish, birds and mammals are exceptional for their abundance, variety, and detail of preservation. Most remarkable is the story they tell of ancient life in a subtropical landscape.

Natural Bridge Falls
This 100-foot waterfall has been around since the late Pleistocene. It is one of the few waterfalls in the park that is still flowing.

Big Timber

Bozeman

Yellowstone Lake

Old Faithful

Yellowstone River

North Fork Wildfire (the Garfield Fire)
A dog house was the only private dwelling lost to the 67,000-acre wildfire of 2008. Gains include minerals rich for the bugs and fishes of the Shoshone River and open habitat for grizzly bears, elk, and bighorn sheep.

The Fires of '88
Yellowstone fires were disastrous in 1888 when wildlife died across more than a third of the park. Two decades later, healthy young forests of lodgepole pines rise from seed cones activated by heat and nourished by ash.

BEARHUT MOUNTAINS
Dated at nearly four billion years, the Bearhuts Mountains are some of the planet's oldest rock. Since the original sediments of the Bearhuts were deposited, uplift, igneous intrusions, streams, and glaciers have formed plateaus and peaks of Precambrian gneiss dissected by deep troughs and hanging valleys.

THE YELLOWSTONE VOLCANO OBSERVATORY (YVO)
An instrument-based monitoring facility for observing volcanic, hydrothermal, and earthquake activity in the Yellowstone region. Details: <http://volcanoes.usgs.gov/yvo/>.

Gros Ventre Slide
Eighty million cubic yards of mountainside plunged into the Gros Ventre River in 1925. The debris dam held for two years before breaching, which ruined ranch lands and drowned six people.

The Red Desert
Eight million acres of rugged beauty are defined by vast expanses of sagebrush, towering buttes, and rainbow colored hoodoos. The Red Desert contains the largest body of active sand dunes in North America and is home to the nation's largest antelope herd, a desert elk herd, as well as wild horses.

Rock Springs

Scale: 1 : 2,000,000
Legend:
Natural or scenic
Museum
Other point of interest

Watchable Wildlife
From grizzly bears to wolves, the Greater Yellowstone is home to the full complement of native predators. Wildlife prefer the early morning and just before sunset, and to catch them through your binoculars, a spotting scope, or a camera, you should too. Bone up with your field guide, and respect the animals from at least 100 yards—especially bears. Likewise, keep your distance from other humans looking for the same animals.

Business and Stewardship
By patronizing distinctive businesses in the gateway communities on the outer edge of the Greater Yellowstone,

businesses know that you care about the conservation and preservation of open lands and that the wildlife and endless space have drawn you here and will bring you back. A follow-up email or letter to lodging or dining facilities encourages their stewardship.

Land of the Grizzly Bear

The famous grizzly bear inhabits much of the Greater Yellowstone. Once on the verge of extinction the grizzly is now rebounding thanks to aggressive conservation measures. Basic precautions can help to keep you safe when hiking in grizzly country: Hike in groups of two or more people. Avoid hiking at night. Make your presence

To deter an aggressive bear, carry bear spray (available at gateway communities). When camping, store all food in bear-resistant containers or hard-sided vehicles.

Climate and Preparedness

The Greater Yellowstone Region sits in a high elevation, mountainous landscape where weather conditions can change abruptly. While the coldest months are typically December through February, snow can fall at any time of the year. Check the local weather report daily, inquire about road closures—especially November to May—and bring appropriate clothing for sudden weather changes. Always tell someone where you are going and when you

yourself with maps and a compass, as well as a first aid kit, flashlight, and again, bear spray.

Thinking of Owning a Home In Greater Yellowstone?

If you're considering relocating to Greater Yellowstone, consider living in town rather than in a rural subdivision or ranchette. These newer places fragment working ranches and wildlife migrations and degrade air and water quality. By choosing a home in town you will help to conserve the qualities that make this region so special (and you're less likely to find a grizzly bear wandering through your backyard). Further, take the Greater



great in June, but the sun can scorch at 105° in July—and reach down to -30° with fifty mile an hour winds in February. Visit during Greater Yellowstone's highs and lows before settling in for the long haul.

Yellowstone National Park in the Winter

Winter is an amazing time to visit the Park. Yellowstone snow-covered landscape lends itself admirably to cross country skiing, snowshoeing, photography, and winter wildlife viewing. Snowcoaches provide an environmentally friendly way of accessing the park in winter. Check the Yellowstone National Park web site at www.nps.gov/yell or gateway community chambers of commerce for

The Yellowstone Book Pack

A well-rounded geotraveler is also a well-read geotraveler. These books reveal the region's personality, illuminate history, and portray its natural life: *Where Rivers Chan Direction* (Mark Spragg), *Hawks Rest* (Gary Ferguson), *A Naturalist's Guide to Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks* (Frank C. Craighead, Jr.), *Silence and Solitude: Yellowstone's Winter Wilderness* (Tom Murphy), *Jackson Hole Hikes* (Rebecca Woods), *Montana: The Best Place* (Kittredge & Smith), *Letters From Yellowstone* (Diane Smith), *The Grand Tetons* (Margaret Sanborn), *Travels in the Greater Yellowstone* (Jack Turner), and *Colter: His Years in the Rockies* (Burton Harris). To make

MAP DATA DERIVED FROM: NASA EARTH OBSERVATORY; OAK RIDGE NATIONAL LABORATORY LANDSCAN 2008/UT-BATTELLE; SRTM3 PLUS; INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR TROPICAL AGRICULTURE (CIAT); U.S. GLOBAL LAND COVER CLASSIFICATION, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND; LINER-WORLD CONSERVATION MONITORING CENTRE AND IUCN.